

Of course, the consequence of that kind of spending policy which has a tendency to aggravate the deficit lays the groundwork for our colleagues on the other side to say, the American people are not taxed enough. We need to actually raise taxes in order to generate more revenue to pay for this additional spending.

This is exactly the kind of response we do not need. As demonstrated by the charts, as demonstrated by the booming economy, we have, as a result of the low tax policy and the progrowth policies of the last 6 years, the American economy could not be stronger or better.

I hope we will all be edified by this factual data demonstrated on the charts and that the misimpression that the distinguished majority leader was under when he called the economy bleak will be now disabused. I hope he will see from the charts and from my comments—not because I said it but because this is what the facts demonstrate—the low tax and progrowth policies we have had over the last 6 years have served the American people very well and that 7.4 million new jobs have been created in America since August 2003. That, indeed, should be what we are all about.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Idaho is recognized.

Mr. CRAIG. The Senator from Colorado is going to speak a little longer, but he has agreed I can interject myself but for a moment.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator is recognized.

#### A VALENTINE TO MY FAMILY

Mr. CRAIG. Madam President, today is an essential day in my life. It is not just Valentines Day. It happens to be the anniversary of the first date I had with my wife Suzanne. Am I a romantic? Well, maybe just a little bit.

Little did I know then that one day we would be celebrating the first date as a married couple with three children and nine grandchildren.

Over the years, I have taken to the Senate to announce the news of our growing family and I ask my colleagues' indulgence again today to send a special valentine to the two most recent additions to our family.

Born November 20 of 2004, a beautiful granddaughter named Lily Terese Craig. On April 18 of 2006, another beautiful grandchild, Damon Oliver Craig, was born into our family. It is a thrill to be a granddad to these wonderful children. It has been a great joy to hold them, to love them, to see them around, and to watch them grow.

My wife Suzanne and I look forward to many happy experiences with Lily and Damon and the rest of our crew. Often we come to the Senate to talk about momentous and meaningful events, but there is no more important event than when grandchildren enter our lives.

Let me thank my colleagues. Let me thank my colleague from Colorado for letting me share with all how much we enjoy these new lives in our family on this Valentines Day.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Colorado is recognized.

Mr. SALAZAR. Madam President, let me congratulate my good friend from Idaho, Senator CRAIG and Suzanne and their grandchildren, Lily and Damon. I wish your family the very best. The family in Idaho, obviously, is where the roots are. Our families are so important to all of us, and we appreciate the Senator coming to the floor and sharing that special valentine message not only with the family but with the Nation and our colleagues in the Senate.

#### FORGOTTEN AMERICA

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I come to the Senate to speak about the forgotten America. That is the rural America which is a wide expanse of the geographic area of these United States. When I came to the Senate 2 years ago, I gave my maiden speech about forgotten America, the rural parts of our country which have been in decline decade after decade after decade.

I did so because if you look at my own history, I come from a place that is 300 miles to the south of Denver, a place that has the name of Conejos, in English meaning rabbit county. It is one of the four poorest counties in the United States of America. In that county, as in so many counties across America, you see the kinds of problems that describe the two Americas we have. We have the America of prosperity, much of that part of America lying within the metropolitan areas of our great Nation, and we have the other America, the forgotten America, the America that struggles on the vine every day to stay alive, the part of America that has great disparity in terms of the kind of health care and the kind of education and the kind of economic opportunity that exists for them.

In my own State of Colorado, there were 64 counties, and out of the 64 counties, even in the great boom of the 1990s when unemployment was nonexistent and our economy was growing at a very rapid pace, most of those counties were withering on the vine. They were declining in population. Their population was aging. They were struggling with health care. They were struggling with a whole host of issues that affect those communities.

Out of the 64 counties in Colorado during the period of 2000 to 2005, 21 of them actually declined in population. That is a third of my State that was actually declining in population. The fact is that same statistic can apply for many other States, including Nebraska, the Dakotas, Idaho, and most of our States around the country.

I am very hopeful, as we move forward in the 110th Congress, that under

the great leadership of Senator TOM HARKIN from Iowa, we will be able to put together a farm bill that will help revitalize rural America and will help us put the spotlight on what has been the forgotten America.

Even as we start the process of moving forward and addressing the issues set forth in the 10 titles of the farm bill, we already see some statistics that to all of us should be alarming. At a hearing we had earlier this week, there was testimony provided to us that the per capita investment in rural America is about \$550 less than it is in urban communities. That is because the formulas we have for community development block grants and other investments the Federal Government makes to help communities ends up, in a very disappointing way, affecting rural communities in these negative ways. I am hopeful, as we move forward with the farm bill, we will be able to correct some of these disparities and create new opportunities for rural America.

We will see one of those opportunities created with our efforts to grow our way to energy independence. The fact of the matter is, both Democrats and Republicans, progressives and conservatives, are coming together to recognize the fact that growing our way to energy independence is a matter of national security, a matter of economic security, and a matter of environmental security. I am tremendously optimistic about what we can do with the new farm bill.

Mr. President, today I speak briefly about two pieces of legislation I have introduced or will soon be introducing that are part of that agenda to try to help rural America. The first, a bipartisan legislation that creates a rural leasing institute. It is legislation which I am proudly sponsoring with Senator PRYOR, my good friend and former attorney general from Arkansas and Senator CHAMBLISS and Senator ISAKSON.

This legislation creates a rural policing institute to make sure our law enforcement in rural communities has a similar kind of opportunity that law enforcement has in the major metropolitan areas. In my State of Colorado, we have about 14,000 peace officers. I had the great honor as the attorney general of that State to serve as the chairman of the board that certified all the law enforcement officers in my State for a period of 6 years. There is a big difference between the kind of training rural law enforcement officers get and the kind of training provided to law enforcement areas in the metropolitan communities. Of the 14,000 peace officers in Colorado, 7,000 of the people work in departments that have fewer than 15 officers. They cannot afford the kind of training to protect themselves and to protect the public safety that other larger metropolitan police organizations can afford.

Therefore, our effort to move forward with this rural policing institute is to